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FILE ONLY

# Captive U.S. diplomat on videotape

## *London TV news agency gets tape from Lebanon*

Associated Press

LONDON — A U.S. Embassy political officer who was kidnapped in Beirut almost a year ago was shown on a videotape yesterday saying he and two other missing Americans were well.

The tape obtained by Visnews, a London-based international television news agency, showed William Buckley, political officer of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, standing alone against a blank wall and holding a copy of a Beirut newspaper dated Jan. 22.

"Today, the 22d of January, 1985, I am well, and my friends Benjamin Weir and Jeremy Levin are also well. We ask that our government take action for our release quickly," Buckley said in the 56-second tape.

The tape did not identify the Americans' captors or specify any demands for their release. The only

previous demand has come in calls from a group identifying itself as Islamic Jihad and calling for all Americans to leave Lebanon.

Visnews managing editor Kevin Hamilton, who showed the tape to reporters at Visnews headquarters in London, released no information on how his agency had acquired the tape. He said no demands from the captors had come with it.

"We do not see ourselves as intermediaries or negotiators," Hamilton said. "We simply obtained the video."

Witnesses saw Buckley, from Medford, Mass., being kidnapped March 16, and the Rev. Benjamin Weir, a Presbyterian minister, being kidnapped May 8. Levin, the Beirut bureau chief of the Cable News Network, has been missing since March 7 and was presumed to have been abducted.

In Washington, State Department

spokesman Bernard Kalb said, "We obviously welcome this evidence that William Buckley is alive and well and the indication that Jeremy Levin and Benjamin Weir are also well."

He said the release of all the kidnapped Americans "remains a top administration priority."

Cable News Network reported that U.S. officials saw another videotape last summer that showed journalist Jeremy Levin and two others assumed to be captives in Beirut, but the administration urged that the matter be kept quiet at the time.

The tape shown yesterday in London made no mention of two other Americans missing in the Lebanese capital even though some of the anonymous phone calls have referred to five Americans. The two are Peter Kilburn, who failed to report for work as librarian at the

American University of Beirut on Dec. 3, and the Rev. Lawrence Jenco of Joliet, Ill., head of the Catholic Relief Services office, who was seen being kidnapped on Jan. 8 this year.

In the video Buckley was wearing a brown jacket. He looked pale but healthy and well-groomed — his mustache was neatly trimmed, his fingernails were clean.

Levin's wife, Lucille, appearing on NBC-TV's *Today* show, called the release of the tape "a very good sign." She said release of the tape was "a signal for negotiations," adding, "and it does mean they are alive, obviously."

The U.S. Embassy in Beirut declined to comment.

The five Americans all disappeared after last February when Druse and Shiite Muslim militias took over the Muslim sector of Beirut.